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The problems of recruiting Mexican American students into colleges and universities are pointed out in these two papers. Edington's paper (title given) discusses teacher education, curriculum development, counseling programs, college entrance requirements, and the need for change and study in these areas with regard to Spanish-speaking students. Programs of financial aid and educational opportunities for Mexican American students are also presented. "The Mexican American in Higher Education: Recruitment," by Frank Angel, points out that recruitment problems are related to the selective academic orientation of college and university recruitment, and selection, counseling, and curricular procedures of the high school and elementary school. Present recruitment programs and practices in colleges which are designed to meet the needs of Mexican American students are discussed. Ways of increasing the pool of Mexican American students are listed, including changes in teaching in elementary and secondary schools geared to this group, improved living conditions for this monority group, universalization of higher education, and eradication of existing discrimination against the Mexican American group by the dominant group. Related documents are RC 003 431, RC 003 432, RC 003 433, and RC 003 436.

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UNITED MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

RECRUITMENT OF SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Everett D. Edington

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RECRUITMENT OF SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

by

EVERETT D. EDINGTON

Published for

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by

California State College, Long Beach

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RECRUITMENT OF SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Everett D. Edington*

The second largest ethnic minority group in the United States is the Mexican American. The majority of these people are found in the southwestern states where a great many of their ancestors have migrated from Mexico. They, like most other minority groups, find themselves greatly underrepresented at institutions of higher education in the country. It is evidenced by their small percentages in higher education, in relation to their percentage of the total population, that the normal recruitment practices of institutions of higher education have not been successful with the Mexican-American youth. Persons throughout the country, and especially the Southwest, are advocating that the recruitment and selection policies of the colleges be reviewed in order to determine ways to attract more youth from the Spanish-speaking families. Nolen Estes (10), when he was Associate Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education in the U. S. Office of Education, in a speech at the Texas Conference for the Mexican American, said that there should be action from within the Mexican-American communities to keep the children in school, and then be sure that they continue with college. He also indicated that the dropout rates are excessively high for the few Mexican Americans

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*Director, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, and Associate Professor, Educational Administration, New Mexico State University

that do go to college. In his same speech, Estes quoted President Johnson as saying "We need more college graduates from the ranks of Mexican-Americans ....They are the models of success for younger Mexican-American boys and girls, such a model being an important element in the cultural, economic, and educational advancement of all people."

Research has revealed that the Mexican-American youth does have aspirations to continue his education. Anderson and Johnson (1) come to the following conclusions in their study of Mexican-American youth in El Paso:

> While the child's desire to complete high school and attend college appear to be related to the parents' educational aspirations for their children, the child's own desire to compete and to achieve in the school, at least by the time he reaches high school, appears to be somewhat independent of his parents' desires in this respect. What's more, the Mexican-American children studied revealed a significantly high desire to succeed in school and attain high grades. Moreover, these children experience the same high degree of encouragement and assistance at home as do their classmates. This finding strongly suggests that the failure of many Mexican-American children is the result of inadequate educational programs, and not the consequences of low level educational aspirations on the part of parents and child as a number of writers have maintained.

Ulibarri (14) made a similar statement concerning the aspiration levels of Mexican-American youth:

> Regarding levels of aspiration, one can surmise that the Mexican-American is in the same continuum as he is found regarding broadness of time orientation. He is found in a continuumfrom very low levels of aspiration to unusually high ones. Levels of aspiration are related to the economic and educational circumstances of the individual. One finds that individuals with better economic means and higher levels of education are more aspirant than those with less economic means and less education. Perhaps there is a cause-effect

> relationship here. However, the same problem exists as with time orientation, namely, that the majority of the Mexican-Americans are found in the ranks of the poor and the uneducated. The problem is not with those who have economic means and are fairly well educated. These know what to aspire for and generally can find the means of attaining these aspirations. The problem is with the poor and uneducated. How can we get them out of the downward spiral that circumstances have placed them in so that they may look up to higher goals and a better life?

Juarez and Kuvlesky (7) reported that in a study of the educational status orientation of tenth grade Mexican-American and Anglo boys in economically depressed areas, the two groups had similarly high educational goals. Intensity of aspiration was slightly higher for the Mexican-American sample as compared to the Anglo. It was suggested that colleges and universities reevaluate entrance requirements to include consideration of student desire to pursue a college education.

We must also remember that a great many of these youth come from home situations which, although they may be encouraged to continue their education, are not conducive to continued studies. Anderson and Johnson (2) in a later study found that while one-half attempt to do well in their school work for some this entails a great deal of effort, as almost half have no place to study at home, and 40 percent are working to earn money during the school year. They also found that only 15 percent of the mothers and 10 percent of the fathers regularly help their children with their school work. Ramirez (11) also showed that the majority of the parents of Mexican-American students encourage them to get all the education they can.

In spite of the attitude of both the parents and youth toward education, we find few going on toward higher education. Changes need to be made in a system which dampens the initiative of this segment of our American youth.

One of the most important areas where change can show the greatest dividends is in the teacher preparation programs. Carter (4) made the following observations regarding teacher education as it relates to Mexican Americans:

> Teacher preparation institutions have done, and continue to do, little to aid their students in coping with the problems associated with cross-cultural schooling and the teaching of the ethnically different Mexican American. Public schools are attempting much more. Colleges and universities are not only failing to lead the way toward improved school opportunity for the minority, they also are failing to follow the lead of lower level institutions. The average teacher preparation program is as adequate for teachers in upstate New York in 1940 as it is for teachers of Mexican Americans in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas in 1969. This condition prevails in spite of the fact that most Southwestern education faculties are well aware that: (1) the vast majority of their students will teach some Mexican Americans; (2) a large percentage will teach in classes or schools with a majority of Mexican Americans; (3) most future teachers of Mexican descent will teach in schools where their own group predominates; (4) both minority group spokesmen and public school educators advocate special programs for teachers; and (5) the Federal Government promotes and could in numerous ways support such programs. Yet little or nothing is done.

The teaching profession not only opens the gate for those individuals who enter the profession, but also places a sympathetic person in a position where they can work with other youth of a similar ethnic background. They can then become models for others to follow.

It would be a mistake for educators to think that programs for recruitment and selection of persons for colleges and universities should be

conducted in a vacuum. Communities and schools should demand total guidance programs for not only those going on and completing higher education, but the bulk of our youth. Large numbers of our young persons of all cultural backgrounds cannot and should not enter into traditional college and university programs. The Mexican American, as well as others, should realize that a great many young people have neither the ability or interest to continue into regular academic programs. The recruitment program for the college-bound should be a part of an overall program which would enable the young person to determine his interests and abilities, and then make his career selection. Unions and industry should be important members of such a project, as well as the professions and higher education. The Mexican-American community can do a great deal of harm to its youth by creating the impression that certain types of careers that demand vocational or technical training are second class. They should do everything within their power to insure that adequate educational programs of all types are available for Mexican-American youths. Our present vocational-technical programs are not adequate, and as higher education have not adequately served the Spanish-speaking youth. Senero Gomez (10), the State Coordinator for International Programs for the Texas Education Agency, at the Texas Conference for Mexican Americans, stated that "It is very important that career counseling at the secondary level be an important part of the education of the Mexican American. Children who have the capabilities of college training should not be guided into vocational courses, and vice versa." A great many young persons have become greatly frustrated when forced into academic programs of which they either had no ability or interest.

Nolan Estes (5) said that, "Occupational programs must be developed which will not only end the student's isolation from the world of work but help him enter that world. Every high school should have a job placement staff member as part of its guidance team. Business and industry will need to have much greater input into curriculum development."

Angel (3) made the following recommendations concerning occupational education programs for Mexican Americans:

> Some realistic thought needs to be given to the occupational-training programs for Mexican-Americans both in school and out-of-school. The problems inherent in this area are in many ways similar to those of other minority groups. For most lower class Mexican-Americans the junior high and the senior high are terminal education points. The general education bias has acted as an obstacle and has prevented realistic pre-occupational and occupational programs from being developed.
>
> The usual shop and vocational education programs in the school have not been suitable for students who must work for a living while in school and immediately upon leaving school. In fact, the economic factor has been an important one in early school leaving.
>
> The distributive education programs have partly answered the need for the in-school students. The occupational programs must accommodate those going into unskilled, skilled, and white-collar occupations. It is to the unskilled and skilled catagories that attention needs to be directed. Another consideration which must be given is the matter of occupational mobility. Training for one lifetime occupation is obviously not suitable in the rapidly changing occupational structure of American Society.

On at least two occasions the author has been told by state supervisors of different subject matter areas of vocational education, in two different states, that their programs were adequate, and it was the fault of disadvantaged minorities for not taking advantage of what was offered. In either case they were not willing to change to meet the needs of the disadvantaged youth. There are two faults with this philosophy. First,

if the programs are not serving those persons which they should serve, something is wrong with the programs, and second, additional efforts should be made to see that those persons who should be served are aware of the programs and take advantage of the opportunities offered. Mexican Americans should be vitally interested to see that educational programs of all types meet their needs, and that the members of their communities are aware of them and are active participants.

Some segments of our society would abolish all standards and entrance requirements in higher education for minority groups. There is no surer way to make them second class citizens in second class programs. Every effort should be made to find those persons who can meet the entrance requirements, and provide means for them to enter the institutions of higher education. Long range programs are then needed to eliminate the inadequacies of our society to see that more minority group persons are prepared to meet these requirements in the future.

There is a real need, however, for higher education to take a good look at their entrance requirements and selection procedures. Experimental programs should be established to admit persons of different cultural backgrounds to determine the adequacy of the selection criteria. These should be strictly controlled and evaluated in order to determine proper criteria for selection. Members of minority groups should encourage such research and insist that proper standards be identified. A majority of Mexican Americans do not want special consideration just

because they have brown skin and speak with an accent. They want the opportunity for all members of their culture to reach the highest levels their abilities allow. Recently, a counselor in a New Mexico high school assured a young Mexican American that because of his ethnic background, he would be accepted into one of the military academies. The young man promptly informed the counselor that, if that were a criteria for his selection, his name should be withdrawn from the nomination. He felt that if he, as a person, did not meet the criteria he should not be selected.

Saunders (12), in his observations of the Cooperative Teacher Education Program at New Mexico State University, made the following statement:

> It was expected in New Mexico that a substantial number of the selectively recruited Cooperative students would be of Mexican American extraction. Of the current enrollees in the program, 60 (52 percent) come from this family background. There are large numbers of economically disadvantaged and talented people in this segment of New Mexico's population. Perhaps the most surprising factor is that this talent was identified in typical school settings where many times the Mexican American succeeds by overcoming many disadvantages not of his own making.

It should be noted for emphasis that the Mexican American students in the Cooperative Program are not selected because of national extraction. They are selected because they are highly qualified and have been subjected to the competition that exists when only 40 students can be selected each year. It is realistic to repeat, however, that they probably would not be in a college anywhere if it were not for the financial opportunity which is a part of the Cooperative Program. It should not be construed, since they are herein pointed out as a special group within the total group, that allowances are made for them. In fact, they bring some "extras" to the program without accompanying deficiencies. The experience thus far with these exceptionally fine young people is they are outstanding within the group. No attempt has been made through either an objective measure or a subjective judgment to rate these students in a rank order. To note in passing that their bilingual and cultural understandings have made it

> possible to single out several senior and junior students of Mexican American extraction is to evaluate fairly. This judgment that they are superior in a select group is based upon actual observations of their effectiveness as assistant-teachers and co-teachers in the school setting.

Mexican-American youth should be encouraged to look at a number of types of programs which will give them assistance in attending institutions of higher education. The coop program mentioned above is in the area of teacher education but there are many others.

Wilson (16), in a paper written for the National Conference on Educational Opportunities for Mexican Americans, stated that:

> In some of the surveys my students have done, they have discovered that one of the major factors for many Mexican-Americans attending higher education institutions in Arizona is that they tended to be encouraged to continue in high school and go on to university education because of their participation in athletic programs. Some of the students are attending university on athletic scholarships, where they would not have attended at all. They probably would not have remained in school had they not felt they were making a contribution and were involved with the sports program. They felt they had a place because they had the talent and skill which was needed by the school.

We must realize that problems will occur in even the best planned programs. There is a tendency to "overtrain" in many cases. Special programs to train teachers or administrators to work in rural schools with large numbers of Mexican-American children may terminate with an Educational Specialist or doctor's degree, and price the person out of the salary range of the intended position. A good example of this is a recent program at the University of New Mexico (9), where, of the ten fellows to be trained as principals for schools enrolling large numbers of Mexican Americans, not one is now in such a position. This

does not mean that the persons involved did not receive excellent training, but that the original objective of the project was not accomplished.

Special Programs in Higher Education for Mexican-Americans

In order to recruit Mexican-American youth into higher education, it is necessary to have a knowledge of programs which are especially geared for their needs. Care should be taken, however, that those students who can meet the entrance requirements for regular programs, and have a reasonable chance of success in such programs, be encouraged to be a part of the regular academic program. Any special programs in higher education designed for a particular minority group should be considered as temporary, and be carried on only until the deficiencies of the particular group can be alleviated. The program should be conducted as long as the need remains, but the emphasis should be on changes in educational programs long before they are ready for higher education.

One of the most widespread programs which identifies and encourages young persons of disadvantaged groups to prepare for and enter into higher education or technical training is the U. S. Office of Education's "Educational Talent Search Program." This was authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965, and provides grants to institutions or organizations to locate and identify these young people who are often unaware of the sources of financial aid available to them for pursuing programs of higher education.

The programs with a specific responsibility for working with Spanish-speaking youth in the Southwest are listed in the U.S.O.E. publication "Search 68." (13) They are:

Tucson Community Council
The Rehabilitation Center

The Tucson Educational Rehabilitation Program serves the greater Tucson metropolitan area, directing some of its efforts to nearby rural communities. The program does not work exclusively with any specific group but involves Mexican-Americans, Negros, Papago and Yaqui Indians, and Anglo-Saxons.

Experienced, well-trained counselors work with the students' personal, emotional problems which are related to their dropping out of school. These counselors are also able to provide the various educational and career guidance services which these students may need.

In addition, the Rehabilitation program makes a concentrated effort to increase the involvement of individuals and civic organizations in these problems, with emphasis on dropout prevention.

California Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc.
The Educational Clearinghouse for Central Los Angeles

The Educational Clearinghouse for Central Los Angeles, sponsored by the California Council for Educational Opportunity, attempts to reach young people of Negro and Mexican-American backgrounds living in south central and east Los Angeles. There are two general objectives that ECCLA is attempting to attain: one is the immediate placement of minority and low-income students in institutions of higher learning; the second is the infusion of the idea that "college is possible" into minority communities.

To implement these objectives, ECCLA has organized a field team which utilizes two vans or mobile counseling offices. In cooperation with the public school system, government agencies, and local community organizations, the field teams make initial contact or identification of the college-potential student. The team counsels and advises the students both in group and in individual sessions. The team helps the student with admissions and financial aid applications, with ACT and SAT tests, obtains fee waivers for the students, and organizes trips to the campuses for interviews.

ECCLA has established a working relationship with many colleges, especially those on the West Coast, in order to facilitate the placement of students. ECCLA also disseminates information on financial assistance and academic programs. The information is in jargon-free language directed at the community at large.

Community Service Organization of Fresno
California Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (CSO-CCEO, Inc.)

The Community Service Organization-California Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. Talent Search project works in seven communities of Fresno County: Biola, Pinedale, Malaga, Selma, Parlier, Huron, and Highway City. It deals specifically with Mexican-American students of high school age, but concentrates maily on ninth and tenth-graders. The objectives of the program are to persuade these students to become aware of their opportunities to go to college and to take preparation courses and graduate from high school with the necessary admissions requirements. CSO-CCEO hopes to reach these goals by informing students and parents of existing programs designed to help youths further their education beyond the high school level and by distributing information on the many forms of financial assistance available to students. Emphasis is placed on convincing parents of the important role that education plays in today's society. Through individual, at-home contacts with students and parents, guidance in choosing proper high school courses for college entrance, and guidance in seeking available sources for financial aid, CSO-CCEO aims at increasing the attendance of Mexican-American students at local junior colleges, colleges, and universities.

Plan of Action for Challenging Times (PACT)

Plan of Action for Challenging Times-Educational Opportunities Clearinghouses serves a five-county area surrounding San Francisco Bay. Afro-Americans represent the greatest percentage of students served; however, Mexican-Americans, American Indians, and low-income Caucasians are assisted in as great a number as possible.

The program leaders believe that talented minority and/or low-income students have not, in most cases, utilized their educational potential by reason of circumstances inherent in their background: especially lack of encouragement, motivation, and finances.

The clearinghouse attempts to bridge this gap by providing the missing link between the talented youths and an institution of higher learning. Students are identified through agency, school, or community referrals. They are then assisted with counseling services, college and financial aid information, and college admissions procedures. The project has developed an educational aid fund, screening process, college assistance program, and a system of commitments from colleges. The clearinghouse will extend its services to dropouts with a junior college mobile unit and into secondary schools through a collaborative arrangement with the college commitment program.

San Diego State College
Project COPE

COPE (Community Opportunity Programs in Education) is a consortium of area colleges and other organizations interested in the education of disadvantaged youth. Its purpose is to provide an integrated community effort to encourage and enable youths and adults, especially members of minority and low-income groups, to undertake and continue postsecondary education. Project COPE works with high school students, high school dropouts, and college dropouts in San Diego County.

COPE works through three means. It identifies students with great financial need and encourages them to continue their education past high school; it publicizes, in English and Spanish, information on financial aid and, through educational incentives programs with potential dropouts and recruitment programs with dropouts, it attempts to keep young people in school. Because COPE includes a wide variety of institutions, it also makes possible the sharing of a variety of ideas and viewpoints and can provide, through referral to its member organizations, a broad range of services.

United Scholarship Service, Inc.
Talent Search Project

In its Talent Search Project, the United Scholarship Service, Inc., a private educational agency which counsels and grants financial aid to Indian and Spanish-American youths, will bring its extensive experience to bear by concentrating its services and providing long-term field work in five communities: Northside Chicago, Illinois (focusing on a large Indian population); Denver and the San Luis Valley of Colorado (with emphasis on the Spanish-Mexican community); Wind River Reservation in Wyoming; Rocky Boy and

Fort Belknap Reservations in Montana; and the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Reservations in South Dakota.

Field workers will live in these communities and work with youths, both in school and out, with their families and with community leaders, including, but not limited to, teachers and counselors. Field workers will be responsible not only for counseling students and relaying information provided by the Office of Education and the United Scholarship Service but will also investigate and develop educational and financial resources in the area suited to community needs. Where they can, they will contribute to interest in continuing education and improve communication and educational practices in the community. As an outgrowth of these field experiences and of information already gathered by United Scholarship Service, Inc., a publications program is planned to provide educational material for other Indian and Spanish-Mexican communities around the country.

New Mexico Highlands University
New Mexico Educational Talent Project

The New Mexico Educational Talent Project, covering the entire state, is concerned with reaching people in rural areas. Approximately three-fourths of the referrals come from Spanish-American homes.

The project proposes to identify and encourage qualified high school graduates and students in the 11th grade or earlier to enter college or vocational schools at the appropriate time. The project is making a sustained counseling effort with Indian children, encouraging them to seek additional education. It is also making an effort to contact dropouts, potential dropouts, and potentially qualified graduates to encourage them to resume their education.

To accomplish these ends, the staff is employing intensive face-to-face counseling and is providing information on financial aid and realistic career choices. The staff encourages students to choose teaching careers, especially in the shortage fields of science, mathematics, and elementary education. In addition, efforts are made to use group counseling and news media. Statewide workshops and institutes for counselors bring them up to date on available opportunities.

Utah State Coordinating Council for Higher Education

The Coordinating Council's Talent Search project works statewide, but stresses especially the Wasatch Front, a geographic area in which the State's three largest cities and 75 percent of the population arelocated. The project works with economically disadvantaged youths, high school and college dropouts, high school graduates who have not begun post-secondary training, and depressed ethnic groups, including American Indians, Mexican-Americans, Negros, and Orientals.

The project acts in large part as an informing and coordinating agency, through which Federal, State, and local resources are consolidated. To encourage youths to complete secondary school and undertakepostsecondary training, the project has undertaken a variety of activities in cooperation with a variety of organizations and agencies, including those specializing in media and techniques. These activities include cooperation with established service and educational structures at both secondary and postsecondary levels, use of mass media, extension of the Talent Search counseling system into the State's rural sections, use of testing, regional conferences, a records system to allow evaluation of the project, and solicitation of help from lending institutions.

University of Washington
Project 408

Project 408 is a statewide program involving the cooperation of all colleges, secondary schools, and community agencies in the identification and encouragement of needy talented students. A 408 student is a youth recognized as having talent and financial need, but lacking in motivation. While concerned with all students in need of aid, the program works diligently with the Mexican-American migrant workers, the various American Indian tribes, and the blacks in the ghettos throughout the State. The State is divided into twelve regions, each comprised of from one to five counties and directed by a regional coordinator with a staff of field workers.

Through the regional approach, the staff works with individuals and their families, commencing at whatever grade level the students are when identified. Their names are listed in a central data bank, so that continuous contact may be provided throughout each year until they have graduated from high school and have entered some type of postsecondary educational institution. Follow-up activities on students placed through 408 are beginning this year. Through publications on existing forms of financial aid and through the involvement of admissions officers and high school and postsecondary counselors with financial aid officers, Project 408 provides the individual help each student needs in making a wise postsecondary educational choice.

Northeastern Arizona Talent Search

The talent search project sponsored by Eastern Arizona College covers the five counties in northeastern Arizona: Apache, Navajo, Graham, Greenlee, and Gila Counties. It aims at high school and college dropouts and high school graduates who, although they showed promise when in school, have not continued their education. These young people have failed to take advantage of opportunities available to them: either they didn't know about them or they weren't motivated.

Project counselors identify these young people, find out what their plans are, and try to encourage them to continue their education. They counsel the ex-students personally, going to their homes and helping them with school applications and a financial aid program. The talent search counselors work closely with high school counselors and administrators in order to locate students in need of the project's services and to learn about their interests and abilities.

There are a variety of ethnic groups in northe tern Arizona: its residents are Apache and Navajo Indians, Mexican-Americans, Negros, and whites. Since certain groups are more concentrated than others in some areas, counselors are placed so that each may most effectively deal with the special problems of one of the ethnic groups.

Another interesting project is at the University of Denver where the Ford Foundation is providing funds for summer seminars for promising Mexican-American college graduates who may be interested in law careers. Eleven of these were selected from the institute to receive scholarships for three years of law school.

At New Mexico State University there is an EPDA program designed to train elementary school principals for schools enrolling large numbers of Mexican-American and Indian children. This begins in June, 1969, with a majority of the trainees being of Mexican-American descent. The Co-op program at New Mexico State has already been mentioned earlier in this paper.

There are also numerous Teacher Corps programs in the Southwest which enroll large numbers of Mexian-American trainees.

These are but a few of the special programs designed to aid Mexican-Americans to enter into institutions of higher education.

In a document recently published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Kniefel (8) listed the following scholarships that are available for Spanish-speaking youth:

> University of Denver, Denver, Colorado: Funds are available for the training of Spanish-speaking Americans for legal careers. Funds are provided by the Ford Foundation.
>
> University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico: The Reverend Uvaldo Martinez Memorial Scholarship is available for Spanish-speaking students who desire to enter public health nursing in the state, need financial assistance, and show creditable scholarship.
>
> John Hay Whitney Foundation: Approximately 30 Opportunity Fellowships for graduate study and for apprenticeships in agriculture, industry, or labor: primarily tenable in the U. S. but may be used abroad; stipend ranges normally from $1000 to $3000 for 1 year; open to U. S. citizens of superior promise with racial or cultural backgrounds or regions of original residence as follows: Negros, Spanish-Americans, American Indians, residents of Guam, Puerto Rico, Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Appalachian and Ozark Mountain Areas, and the Trust Territories. The deadline is November 30.
>
> United Scholarship Service, Inc.: 100 scholarships are available for students of Spanish-American or American Indian ancestry for undergraduate study in any regionally accredited college or university. The amount of the scholarship varies with the need of the student. The deadline is April 1.
>
> The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese: One scholarship of $750 will be offered each year to a native Spanish-speaker based on the results of the A.A.T.S.P. National Spanish Contest. The contest is sponsored by the Borden Company Foundation.

Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, California: One $900 scholarship each year for a native Spanish-speaker.

Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica (SHH): One Future Teacher Award each year for $500 for a graduating senior who intends to become a teacher of Spanish.

New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico: The Fabian Garcia Memorial Fund awards thirty scholarships in the amount of $90 to be applied toward dormitory rent in Garcia Hall. First preference is given to boys of Spanish descent.

Every guidance counselor, teacher, and administrator in schools enrolling Mexican-American students should be aware of the programs and scholarships available to Mexican-American youth, and encourage these young people to further their education.

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For additional copies and information:

Dr. Mayer J. Franklin
School of Education
California State College
Long Beach, California 90801

THE MEXICAN AMERICAN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: RECRUITMENT

by

Frank Angel

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THE MEXICAN AMERICAN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: RECRUITMENT

By Frank Angel*

I. INTRODUCTION

Implicit in the training program and in the title of this paper is the idea that there should be more Mexican American students in the nation's colleges and universities than there are at present. The statement raises the question of whether there should be more Mexican Americans studying in colleges and universities. It is a fundamental question which should be answered. I suspect that the answer is not a straightforward "Yes! The more the merrier!" that seems to be implied in the training program or in the title of this paper or, for that matter, in the minds of many Mexican Americans and non-Mexican Americans. This paper, however, is concerned with the problem of recruitment for higher education and the question raised above will not be explored.[1]

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*The author is Assistant Dean, School of Education, University of New Mexico.

[1]This is a complex question. Undoubtedly there is a need for educated leaders in the Mexican American community: there is, in a democracy, the need also to have a well-educated citizenry. There is the question regarding whether the pressure to get more Mexican Americans into college isn't, in fact, partly motivated by "status seeking" as an expression of the egalitarian ideology of American society, as well as a reaction to the limitations of access to higher education that the Mexican American has experienced. The acquisition of status symbols, of which college education is a primary one in American society, would be evidence of achievement and acceptance. Suppose, to make the point, that suddenly the Mexican American found himself accepted as he is by the dominant group. Would the same reasons for seeking a college education still apply?

Recruitment is concerned with "how" to get more Mexican Americans into the colleges and universities.[2] This presupposes another question: "Why do not more Mexican Americans get into higher education than do and what should be done about it?" The problem of recruitment cannot be satisfactorily answered until the why question is answered.

A number of "givens" in present American society explain in large part why more Mexican Americans do not enter college. Among the most important of these are: (a) the selective academic orientation of the American college and university; (b) the present elementary school and secondary school educational programs that discriminate against Mexican Americans and do not meet their educational needs; (c) the life conditions of the lower-class majority of Mexican Americans; and (d) the anti-Mexican American discriminatory maintenance system of American society.

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[2]The unavailability of education information on the Mexican American makes it difficult to ascertain the numbers now attending institutions of higher learning, ascertaining the attrition rate for those who enter college, and the numbers available in the high school pool. This information is badly needed for planning purposes. It should be secured for all levels of education. Minority groups should insist on having this information collected.

According to one report, (The Mexican-American, Quest for Equality, a report of the National Advisory Committee on Mexican American Education, 1968, Washington, D.C.) the average Mexican American child in the Southwest drops out of school by the seventh year. In Texas, 89 per cent of the children with Spanish surnames drop out before completing high school; in California in some school more than 50 per cent drop out between grades 10 and 11 and one Texas school reported a 40 per cent drop-out for the same grades; although Spanish surnamed students make up more than 14 per cent of the public school population in California, less than one-half of one per cent of college students enrolled in the seven campuses of the University of California are of this group.

Within the "givens" of the present situation much can be done to get more Mexican Americans into colleges and universities; however, basic improvement will require changes in the institutionalized factors listed above. Some of these needed social changes are already appearing. Federal legislation has, at least, recognized the fact that there is a problem. The Mexican American community is awakening to the possibility of forcing change and improving its lot in the American social structure.

II. THE INSTITUTIONALIZED SYNDROME

The College

The extension of free public education to the college level has not yet been achieved in this country. Colleges are selective of those they let enter. Generally the academically talented with sufficient economic resources attend college. Lower-class youth, generally, because of their life and educational experiences have not qualified to meet the expectations of successful college participation.[3]

Colleges are characterized by numerous obvious and some rather subtle discriminating practices that keep out and weed out those unable to withstand the rigors of college expectations. Those Mexican Americans who because of conditioning factors in their home,

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[3]There are, of course, exceptions. The lower-class high school student with academic talent is generally encouraged to go to college. Whether he does, in fact, attend, is another matter. Propinquity as a factor in college attendance is probably quite important. The location of junior colleges close to the residence centers will probably see an increase of Mexican Americans getting post-high school education.

culture and schooling are not able to qualify for college admittance, are excluded. If they do succeed in entering many will drop out before graduation. Those Mexican Americans from middle-class backgrounds constitute the largest number attending colleges today. Since middle-class status is the best single predictor of college attendance, it is not the student from this social class who requires more attention; it is the student who has promise from the lower social class who probably should be the object of those interested in getting more Mexican Americans into college.

Early identification of those students with college potential in the high school, the provision of personalized counseling and tutoring and the provision of financial assistance, are some of the prac tices that will help to get more students into college.

Special pre-freshman programs based upon specific diagnosis and corrective work will further prepare the student for college work.[4]

A little-recognized factor in recruitment and in keeping the Mexican American student in college is related to non-academic life. The student needs to have some group on campus with which he can identify. The impersonality and anonymity of dormitory life, of large classes bear heavily upon continuance in college.

Counseling programs need considerable overhauling. Assignment to Mexican American professors who are sympathetic to the students could go a long ways in overcoming some of the problems the students

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[4]At the University of New Mexico a special program for Mexican American students will provide a summer of special work prior to registration as freshmen. The program will provide special help during the freshman year, as well as additional help in the summer prior to the sophomore year. Dr. Richard Griego of the Math Department and Dean George Springer of the Graduate School are organizing and administering the program.

have in college.[5]

As colleges and universities across the country begin to give attention to the special needs of minority group students, some of these factors and others, will be attacked. These are after-the-fact correctives. It is in the high school where much of the basic work to get Mexican Americans into colleges must be done.

The High School

The selection of students who attend college can best be seen as a chain. The college selects from those who knock at its door from the high school; the high school selects from the time the students enter junior high until they finish the twelfth grade from those students who enter from the elementary school. Not all of those who enter the first grade in the elementary school terminate the sixth grade. Long-range recruitment solutions for the Mexican American will need to give attention to pre-school, elementary and secondary school education. Within the present context of concern, however, it is important to look at what happens in the high school.

College selection begins in the high school. In spite of track diversification, the high school succeeds in retaining only the highly motivated and academically-oriented Mexican American student. The norm is still largely academic in spite of track diversification. All of the environmental factors impinging upon and influencing the

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[5]The number of Mexican American professors or persons interested in Mexican American students is extremely small in most colleges and universities, and is in itself an indication of the negation of opportunity for college education to the Mexican American, as well as an expression of the academic and intellectual discrimination of the "elite syndrome" of most colleges and universities.

school performance of Mexican American students are operative in the high school. The pressures on the high school for higher standards; more knowledge input; the stranglehold of the Carnegie unit upon the development of innovative curricula for the non-academically talented; the academic orientation of the teachers due, in part, to their pre-service training; the middle-class orientation of the curriculum and of the teachers; the high value placed upon verbal facility and abstract cognitive skills, are among the factors that militate against lower-class Mexican American students. The subtlety of discriminatory school practices is still largely unexplored and unrecognized.[6]

Low academic performance, low motivation, coupled with behavioral and personality problems are typical of the Mexican American high school student with poverty backgrounds. Insensitive and poor teaching, irrelevant curricula based upon lack of knowledge of Mexican American culture and its influence upon the cognitive development of the students assure that most Mexican American lower-class students will endure the high school only until they can get out and they certainly will not entertain any notions about attending college.

The Mexican American student pool in the high school from which college students may be drawn is therefore not very large from the group described above.[7]

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[6]Specifically, what the drop-out rate is for Mexican Americans as compared to non-Mexican Americans, is unknown. School systems do not keep records according to minority group status, but it is probably higher than for the non-Mexican American.

[7]Not all students of Mexican American descent from middle-class homes will attend college. The pool for college students will be composed largely from this group plus some from the lower socio-economic group. Students from both of these groups provide the pool from which colleges can draw.

Each individual student from both groups will require help. In some cases the help may need to be financial, in others academic, in others personal. Once in the college, these students will continue to require help.

III. PRESENT RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS

The typical college-recruitment-day program which most colleges hold in high schools when representatives of the colleges go into the high schools and cite the advantages of their respective institutions, will do little for the borderline Mexican American student. In one study conducted by the University College at the University of New Mexico on Mexican American students enrolled it was found that the urging of teachers was more responsible for college attendance than that of the counselors or college people.[8]

It is probable that peer group influences in the high school are more important than those of the staff. Also, it is highly likely that parental aspirations and plans are key factors in college attendance. Lower-class parents do not usually aspire to college attendance for their sons. Early marriage, drop-outs, economic limitations and poor academic achievement combine, in many instances, to prevent college attendance. "The culture of poverty" for many Mexican American students makes discussion of college attendance almost irrelevant.[9]

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[8]William Huber, Sven Wither, and Bruce Potter, "A Longitudinal Study of the Beginning Freshman Class, 1969, at the University of New Mexico," University College and Counseling Center. University of New Mexico, May, 1969. An excellent study of the Mexican American student is included; the study will probably be a model for similar studies in other colleges and universities.

[9]Oscar Lewis, The Children of Sanchez, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. and Random House, 1961.

IV. PRESENT PRACTICES IN COLLEGES DESIGNED TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

Within the context of the present system, some things can b done to get more Mexican Americans into the colleges; these are ameliorative and do not get at basic causes. The desire to get an education is not a cause but a symptom of social and cultural conditions which must be corrected before more Mexican Americans will get into and con tinue in higher education. The educational system at present is a reflection of the larger society in which the majority group seeks to maintain its position of control. It is, ipso facto, discriminatory against minority groups. The norm is the present system and to get more Mexican Americans into the present they must accommodate to it. It is sociologically and psychologically significant evidence of the fact that the system is discriminatory that compensatory measures are beginning to be recognized as needed. Most of these are to the effect that the Mexican American needs to accommodate to the system and not the system to the Mexican American.[10]

The acceptance of pluralistic norms in the colleges instead of the monolithic "academic" standards probably will come about whether or not the conservative elements in the larger society are ready and willing to accept pluralistic values.

At present the "intellective syndrome" is the norm in the colleges and this limits the extent to which higher education can become

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[10]The outraged cries of some academicians regarding the lowering of standards, of the "vocationalization" of the liberal arts, of the technification of higher education, are heard on all sides. The question of the relevancy of higher education sheds off the academic back like water off the proverbial duck. The unpopularity among college faculties and administrations of the "activist" faculty member and student who, attempting to force college confrontation with the issue, is a characteristic of the present so-called "campus unrest."

responsive, not only to the Mexican American needs but to those of other minority groups as well.

Counseling

Typical high school and university counseling provided for most students is inadequate for most Mexican American students. It is too superficial, too related to crises, and not individualized nor intensive enough. Teacher encouragement regarding college attendance seems to be more effective.[11]

Conferences with parents of high schoolers are indicated; more individualized conferences with the students; improvement of independent study habits; help in obtaining financial aid; improvement in reading and communicative arts; discussion of life goals and the place of education within their context, are among some of the things that must be included.

Most counselors do not understand the influence of Mexican American culture on the motivational and behavioral system of the student.[12]

An untapped source of help is the Mexican American student already on campus. In addition to counseling and advice, the Mexican American campus groups should make an effort to provide the new student the opportunity to identify himself with them.

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[11] Huber, op. cit.

[12] The emphasis on "bilingual education" has as one of its principal objectives the sensitization of non-Mexican American educators to what cultural differences mean in behavior. A program at Texas Tech under the direction of Dr. Owen Caskey is designed to train guidance personnel for work with Mexican American children and youth. Many projects funded under the Bilingual Education Act have similar objectives.

College guidance programs need to be organized to provide the new student with the needed help at critical periods of his college life. The best single thing that colleges can do for the Mexican American is to recognize that he has special needs beyond those that they attempt to meet through Freshman Orientation Programs. Another thing that can be done is to organize, on a permanent basis, services to assist those in need of help, rather than as remedial, one-shot programs.[13]

Personal counseling needs to be organized in such a way that it involves the students at regular sessions rather than to await the development of a problem or crisis. Mexican American professors or non-Mexican Americans who are sensitive to the special needs of Mexican American students can be an important source of help.

Tutoring

Another practice being used with increasing frequency in colleges for those students having difficulty with their studies, and which is especially well suited for the Mexican American with similar difficulties, is that of tutoring. It is also being done in the high schools, with college students going out to the high schools to tutor high school students. This is especially valuable because it provides the specific academic help needed by the student. It is excellent for Mexican American high school students especially if the tutor is a Mexican American college student. It gives them someone in the college with whom to identify and will provide an additional stimulus for ambitioning college. For the Mexican American college student, the provision of tutoring service to other Mexican Americans will give

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[13]This proposal is almost certain to bring cries that the colleges are not baby-sitting or spoon-feeding agencies.

him insight into his own problems and involve him in a situation useful in his own development.

Tutoring for Mexican Americans will require some competencies not needed as much by Anglo students: instruction in English-as-a-second-language and knowledge of the problems encountered by persons making cultural transitions. Tutoring can be effective if it is based on specific and correct diagnoses of the learning problems of students. It is necessary that the diagnostician be a trained person who knows the special learning problems of the Mexican American. The possibility of using tutoring-counseling to help with personal problems--economic, familial, motivational, or emotional--should be experimented with. An effective tutoring program needs to be organized under official sponsorship and direction. The possibility of providing economic or academic credit incentives for the tutors is another possibility worth exploring.

Remedial Programs

Programs similar to tutoring are being tried in a number of colleges. The provision of remedial instruction for groups of students with similar difficulties, who are borderline, is an effective way of helping large groups. The students are identified during the senior year in high school, or after high school graduation. A special remedial program is provided for them during the summer that precedes their enrollment in college. The work is similar to that provided by colleges for students who do not pass all entrance examinations except that the program can be tailored more to Mexican American students.

Emphasis on language arts: oral English, reading, composition, and spelling, as well as mathematics, improvement of study skills including the use of the library, term paper research and writing, and training in analytical thinking would probably constitute the bulk of

the program. Additionally, it will provide the student with a period of orientation and adjustment from the personalism of high school life to the more autonomous life in college. There should be considerable attention to the teaching of cognitive skills and processes which for the Mexican American student is likely to be an area of greatest deficiency.

It should be recognized that what is being dealt with here is experiential meagerness, not solely academic retardation. Probably the single most rewarding enrichment program would be one that would include guided travel and planned experiences in the arts, with literature and technology. The remedial experiential program would be more beneficial if it were started at the high school level. The approaches to teaching the Mexican American on the basis of stereotypes leads to limiting the experiences provided rather than expanding them, which is a more basic need.[14]

Financial Aid

The provision of financial aid, probably in the form of scholarships, is another urgent need for Mexican American students who might otherwise not be able to attend college. The major problems here are finding sources of funds and providing sufficient help to allow for meeting experiential personal needs as well. To this writer's knowledge

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[14]"Upward Bound" and "Higher Horizons" are examples of programs which could be beneficial to Mexican American students. The El Paso, Texas Public Schools had a program for gifted students that has applicability to Mexican American students. Each semester a group of some ten or fifteen straight-A students met each Saturday with some noted person in the community or region: a jurist, an architect, a space scientist, an author, an artist, a painter, etc. This provided experiential expansion, as well as depth.

no state has earmarked funds for Mexican Americans. It is probable that funding will have to come from federal sources although each state must recognize that equalization of educational opportunity, for groups which for one reason or another have been and are disadvantaged, means providing more than usual financial support.

College scholarships are usually given on the basis of high academic performance and would rule out most Mexican American students in need of financial assistance.

Para-professional Preparation

There has been a gradually increasing demand on the colleges for universal admittance of high school graduates regardless of grades, performance on entrance exams, or other selective criteria. The upsurge of activism among minority groups is increasing the pressure. Within academic these demands are causing a great deal of consternation, discussion, and soul searching. The fear of "watering down" courses and lowering standards, is a real one in the eyes of many college people.

The responses to the demands are varied, but in an attempt a keeping the colleges functioning within the academic syndrome, junior colleges have been established. The junior college can cut two ways: it can provide terminal education in para-professional areas (middle manpower) for those who do not wish to go beyond this level and it can provide the first two years of college for those who do continue. This is in reality an extension of the high school for two more years. It keeps the colleges unsullied for the academically prepared as well as for those going into professional and graduate work.

In some states where the junior college is under the direct administration of the university and in which the major curricula offered are academic rather than technical-vocational, there have

sprung up institutions for para-professional and technical training. Thus, the university is temporarily spared having to face up to the question of universal admittance and the provision of utilitarian programs.

V. THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION

As has been explored above, much can be done to get more Mexican Americans into college within the framework of the "givens" identified. However, increasing the pool of students from which the college can draw requires some basic changes in: (a) teaching in the elementary and secondary schools that is geared to Mexican American needs;[15] (b) improvement in living conditions of lower-class Mexican Americans (both socially and economically); (c) universalization of higher education;[16] (d) eradication of the discrminiation against the Mexican American group by the dominant group and, an authentic acceptance of a pluralistic social order.

That such changes are "in the air" is evident to anyone observing American society. Probably more than any other single factor, the Negro movement is changing the status of minority groups in the country. The Mexican American is just now beginning to stir. The

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[15] Personal letter to Armando Rodriguez on the model curriculum. Two factors, among others, the lack of knowledge regarding the effects of culture on school performance and the middle-class orientation of the curricula in elementary and secondary schools have discriminated against the Mexican American student.

[16] The case for allowing anyone to enter college, regardless of academic ability is a very strong one, especially in the professions. Since there has been a gradual erosion of the liberal arts general education component in the colleges--the professionalization of general studies--there is a trend toward the "verticalization" of general courses, especially in math and science.

social legislation of the past decade is providing the vehicle for social reform.

The extremes of rectification which are evident in campus movements are symtomatic of the repression suffered by the minority groups. The responses to the demands of the minority groups are beginning to take form. Since schools, as well as other social institutions, seldom take the leadership in social reform, it is likely that they will mirror changes in the larger society first. Conservatism is another name for maintaining the status quo and change in the status quo must first come about before these changes are mirrored the colleges.

The complex of factors bearing on the Mexican American's entrance into higher education are deeply embedded in the social matrix. The discussion in the previous pages implies the basic changes needed if more Mexican Americans are to go to college than even improvement in the present system can provide.

Enough has been indicated in the previous pages to indicate that within the "givens" of the present situation much can be done to increase the number of Mexican Americans in the colleges. The problem is not, however, primarily a recruitment problem; it is a social problem of the society; it is an educational problem within the university; and it is a psychological problem for the Mexican American.

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